

**MINUTES
FOCUS MACOMB
EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING**

Lakeside Community Bank
43850 Schoenherr Road
Sterling Height, MI 48313

May 22, 2006

Members Present:

Barbara Rossman, St. Joseph Mercy of Macomb ~ Education and Workforce Development
Committee Co-Chair
Frank Blowers, President, Lakeside Community Bank ~ Education and Workforce
Development Co-Chair
Dominic Abbate, President, Wakely Associates
Richard Deneweth, President, MEA-NEA Local 1
Gail Green (representing Mike Devault), Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD)
Nancy Falcone, UAW Int'l. Representative, UAW Region 1
Melody Gorno, VP Campus Operations, Davenport University
Jim Jacobs, Director Center Workforce Development, Macomb Community College
Alisha Maria Johnson, Plant Manager Administrative Assistant, Dupont Auto Systems
Al Lorenzo, President, Macomb Community College
Lou Moss, Co-Owner Unlimited Enterprises
Kurt Nerva, President, PTI Engineered Plastics
DiAnne Pellerin, Superintendent, L'Anse Creuse Public Schools
Scott Smith, Area Director of Business Operations, Comcast

Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Staff Present:

Jeffery Schroeder, Program Manager, GIS and Graphic Services
~ Education Committee Staff Advisor
Cheryl Bushbaker – Staff – Department of Planning & Economic Development

Guest Present:

Don Torline, President, Baker College of Clinton Township ~ Focus Macomb Co-Chair

The meeting was brought to order at 2:00 p.m. by Barbara Rossman and Frank Blowers, Co-Chairs of the Education Sub-Committee. Each committee member then introduced themselves and spoke of their interest in being on this sub-committee.

TIME LINE AND EXPECTATIONS

Ms. Rossman stated final report and recommendations need to be back to the Board of Commissioners by mid-October. There will be approximately 7 meetings taking place prior to October in order to get our report completed. Ms. Rossman feels very confident we can achieve this goal especially with the incredible diversity of this committee.

Mr. Torline discussed the expectations for this committee as follows:

- Discuss the issues in Macomb County in regards to education
- Come up with real workable solutions that require partnering
- Present the ideas and solutions to the Board of Commissioners

The goal, as we go forward in education in Macomb County, is to have a workforce that is educated and has the skills that can operate in a cutting-edge industry. Macomb County needs to focus on keeping people here in the County instead of relocating to another state/county.

Mr. Torline noted a “traditional” student normally finishes high school and then enters college. These student are generally high skilled and will leave for companies and corporations out-of-state. The skill levels (math, science, reading and writing) of “non-traditional” students (students who have not gone to college) need to be upgraded so they can survive, not only in the collegiate institution, but also in a cutting-edge market. Mr. Torline also noted that only 19-20% of Macomb County are college graduates.

COMMITTEE EXPECTATIONS

Ms. Rossman stated the committee will stay in touch with other sub-committees, particularly the Business Development Infrastructure. As we discuss education and workforce development, we need to be clear on what business strategies are being proposed so we have parallel strategies in terms of education and workforce development to meet the needs of the community. The staff will meet on a regular basis sharing information and forming our dialog as we move forward to our final report.

PRESENTATION – JIM JACOBS, DIRECTOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. Jacobs discussed the impact of the changing workplace on workforce preparation, certain challenges for communities that our heavily dominated by manufacturing work, and how should educational institutions and the private sector collaborate to respond.

PRESENTATION – JIM JACOBS, DIRECTOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE (continued)

Mr. Jacobs stated jobs are changing as computers eliminate routine and repetitive work, eliminating many “good jobs”. With this, the communication and coordination between the workplaces become very important. A very important trend occurring in society is the private sector is making workers more responsible for training. Also, increasing the use of smaller business units – rapid reorganization of business units produces great volatility at the workplace. The reality is a significant number of jobs can be outsourced to other firms or other countries.

Mr. Jacobs feels it is hard to organize training and education programs around a technology or a specific skill. The markets must be clear – if you are not going to organize programs around a technology or skill, you can organize programs around the needs of companies or clusters as demands arise for certain kinds of skills. Knowing those needs, this allows for the development of career pathways which are both based on a combination of abilities and also credentials of degrees (which can also be apprenticeships, private sector certifications). Finally, merging adult basic education and occupational training to accelerate learning and wages.

Mr. Jacobs noted some strategies for the future:

- Establishment of markets for companies who want to utilize community colleges for their workforce needs
- Develop a local common set of definitions, career pathways and measurement of success for activities
- Organize non-routine work programs around the needs of local firms
- Develop new jobs for research, design and coordination of work with industry

Mr. Jacobs discussed in detail job growth/loss and occupational changes in the job market (please see power point presentation for more in-depth information).

Mr. Jacobs noted we need to recognize reality:

- Auto industry will shrink in size and economic significance in the Metropolitan area
- Letting market forces “work” or simply “cutting taxes” will not produce sustainable jobs and income for residents
- Grow specific industries related to knowledge-based auto production
- Extend into defense and design industries
- Focus on non-repetitive technical work
- Focus on complimentary strategies: toolbox for “bio-technology” companies

He also noted that outside of the auto industry there is a dual strategy:

- Raise the number of college degrees to prepare Macomb citizens for work in an uncertain period
- Focus on non-routine, non-college work for Macomb citizens
- Construct career pathways for adults and young people

PRESENTATION – JIM JACOBS, DIRECTOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
MACOMB COMMUNITY COLLEGE (continued)

Mr. Jacobs stated that a significant number of people are moving into the county with approximately 10,000 in each decade being new Americans who are highly skilled individuals. Since the Year 2000, between 17,000-20,000 people have come to Macomb County primarily from the Middle East, the Balkan Area, India and China. The highest educated new Americans tend to be Chinese and Asian Countries and the lowest educated new Americans tend to be from the Middle East and the Balkans, particularly Albania. We have the largest concentration of Albanians in the United States, per capita.

Finally, Mr. Jacobs feels the challenges are:

- How to provide a comprehensive workforce development strategy to serve the multitude needs of the county
- How to continually adjust the short-term part of the strategy and maintain the long-term perspective
- How to involve employers in the development and implementation of the strategy

BRAINSTORMING SESSION/PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- How to make college affordable. One way - employers assisting in the financial aspect of college
- Growth is slightly higher at the undergraduate level than the graduate level. Over the last six years, the number of total degrees granted was up 16%, and the number of Bachelor Degrees was up 18%, so actually new growth is up at a four-year level.
- Increase in the production of degrees has been offset by a loss of graduates to other regions and other states
- Need to find new ways to bring new jobs into the region and have the skill sets brought up to the level to fill those jobs (not always necessary to have a four-year degree)
- Many students do not have the basics they need regardless of what job it is in terms of math, science, reading and writing.
- Need to find a way to identify recruits of their need for job skills before they enter the job market
- More work needed on communication skills, working on problem-solving teams, working in groups
- Need stronger work ethics

BRAINSTORMING SESSION/PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION (continued)

- Need improvement on filling out applications
- Sense of Entitlement – how to make people more self-aware and more self accountable
- Focus on the fundamental part which makes this county run - the automotive industry
- How diversity can be used as a strength issue
- The County lacks the perception of having attractive opportunities to bring both workers and investors to the region
- Statistics show high school graduates and college graduates change jobs seven times in their working lifetime
- Find a way to identify with students who are not receiving ethics and training at home and help them to learn
- 95% of companies in Macomb County are employed by 50 people or less
- Besides the automotive industry, large number of people employed in the agricultural business
- Education counseling should be addressed throughout school years
- Generation issues – younger generation work long hours at minimal paying jobs which makes it difficult to attend college.
- There is an expectation gap between younger generation and employers. Younger generation communicate far better than older generation – the key is to channel it in the right direction.
- Students are graduating without meeting criteria of the workforce
- Opportunities do exist – how do we inspire hope
- Need child care assistance for people who wish to return to school for more education

WRAP UP

The Education Committee will focus on issues that affect how educational opportunities affect economic development in Macomb County and develop strategies that enhance and strengthen the county's overall economic success.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:00 P.M. The next meeting is June 6, 2006 at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital – Board Room.